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In re patent application of:	) Date: August 15, 2011
Bradley R. HAMMELL	) Attorney Docket No.: F-759-P1
Serial No.: 10/580,484	) Customer No.: 00919
Filed: May 24, 2006	) Group Art Unit: 3687
Confirmation No.: 2385	) Examiner: Iwarere, O.

Title: Method for Providing a Shortcut to Shipping Information

Mail Stop Appeal Brief- Patents
Commissioner for Patents
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Response to Notice of Non-compliant Appeal Brief

Sir:

In response to the Notification of Non-Compliant Appeal Brief dated July 15, 2011, attached please find revised Section V of the Appeal Brief, Summary of Claimed Subject Matter.

No fee is believed due. The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees that may be required or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 16-1885.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of Appellants,

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V.   Summary of Claimed Subject Matter

Appellant's invention as presently claimed relates generally to status inquiries regarding delivery of shipments. People who use delivery companies with online access usually track and confirm delivery of packages by remembering a unique--and usually difficult to remember--tracking identifier. Such a tracking code is normally a string of letters and/or numbers that have no easily remembered meaning. According to a second alternative method, the user must go through a time-consuming authentication process in order to access the tracking identifier. Either of these two methods has drawbacks.

The present illustrative process is as convenient as activating a script or executable file, in order for a user to check and verify shipping status. For instance, at the time of a transaction, the company (i.e. a merchant, carrier, or related business) will formulate a small html page that is capable of redirecting the user to the carrier's web site with the query and tracking identifier already entered. The user is then given the option to save this small html page on the user's desktop or other local storage area. From then on, the user just double clicks that html file, and current shipping information is displayed without any need for memorizing a tracking identifier or authenticating.

An illustrative embodiment of the application is well-suited to a situation in which a user is tracking more than one shipment, either using a single carrier or a plurality of carriers. In the latter case, at least some shipping data is aggregated so that a user is able to quickly and easily access shipping status from two or more carriers.

When a user clicks on a desktop icon or other hyperlink, the user is not only provided delivery status, but is also provided with the opportunity to have delivery status updated. For example, a carrier will already typically update delivery status when the package arrives at a discrete set of points A, B, C, D, and E. The illustrative embodiment of the application allows the user to find out where the item is between, for example, points A and B or between points B and C. This is accomplished, for example, by having GPS units on vehicles. Advantageously, the user is provided one free access to the system, and then has to pay for further clicks in order to get this deluxe pinpoint

tracking information within a certain time of clicking the icon or hyperlink.   See Specification at page 1, line 1 through page 2, line 19.

Several illustrative embodiments are presented.   As shown in FIG. 1, a user is provided 100 with a shipping pinpoint symbol and a shipping checkpoint symbol. These may be icons on the user's desktop. The user decides 105 whether checkpoint status is adequate or whether more precise pinpoint information is required. If checkpoint status is sufficient, then the user clicks 110 on the checkpoint symbol.   If the user is not connected 112 to the internet, then a connection is established 115. When the connection is in place, a checkpoint inquiry is sent 117 to the shipping carrier, and the carrier provides a checkpoint location to the user. Subsequently, the user is able to repeat this procedure. If, at step 105, the user decides that more precise shipping status is desired, then the user clicks 121 on the shipment pinpoint symbol. In response to that inquiry, the carrier ascertains 129 a pinpoint location of the shipment between checkpoints. This may be done, for example, by communicating with a delivery truck or airplane which is equipped with a global positioning satellite (GPS) device, and then the carrier can plot the GPS coordinates on a map and present 131 the map to the user.
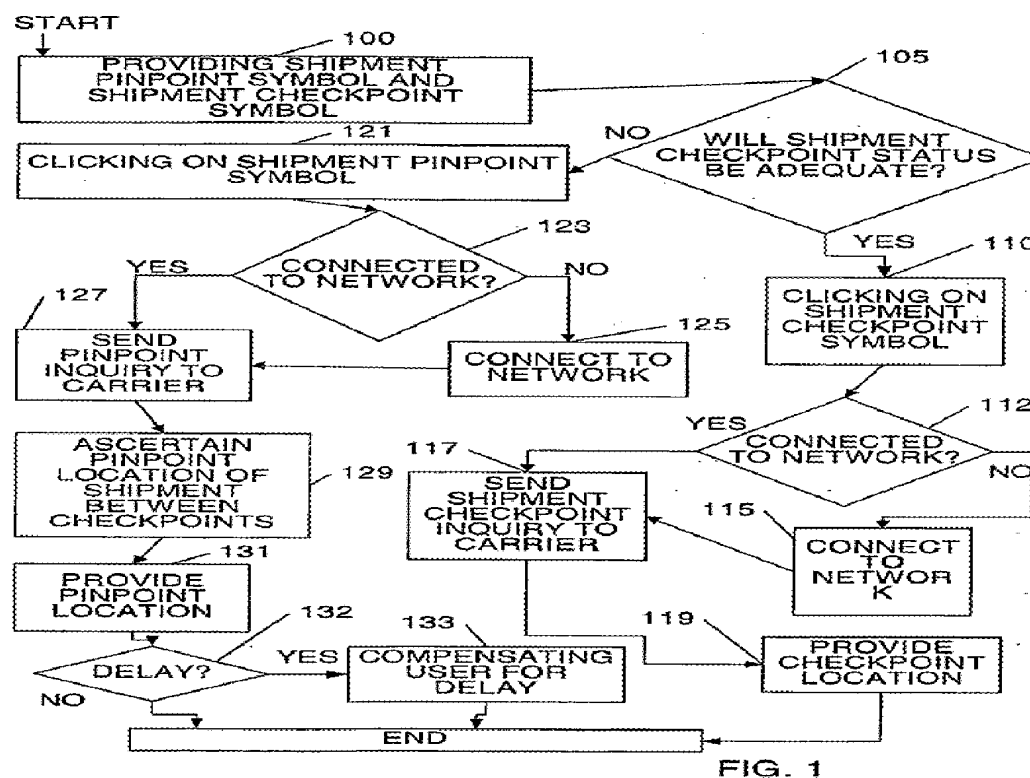
FIG. 1

See FIG. 1, Specification at page 3, line 13, through page 6, line 20.

In FIG. 3 below, a system 300 according to the present application is shown. The user's computer 310 displays a shipment pinpoint symbol 315 and a shipment checkpoint symbol 320. These symbols may be displayed at the user's desktop. In any event, the user will click on the checkpoint symbol 320 to find out the checkpoint or checkpoints at which the presence of the shipment has been detected. Or, the user will click on the pinpoint symbol 315 to actually cause the carrier to find out where the shipment (e.g. a letter, package, or any other item that can be delivered) is located between checkpoints. The carrier does this by using a shipment location tracker device 322 for contacting a delivery vehicle 324, so that the delivery vehicle will report its position between checkpoint A and checkpoint B. The delivery vehicle 324 will detect its position, for example, using a GPS unit. The shipment location tracker device 322 may be a wireless phone, radio, or other communication device. Regardless of which symbol the user clicks, the inquiry will be sent to the carrier via a network such as the internet 325, and the reply from the carrier will also be sent that way as well.
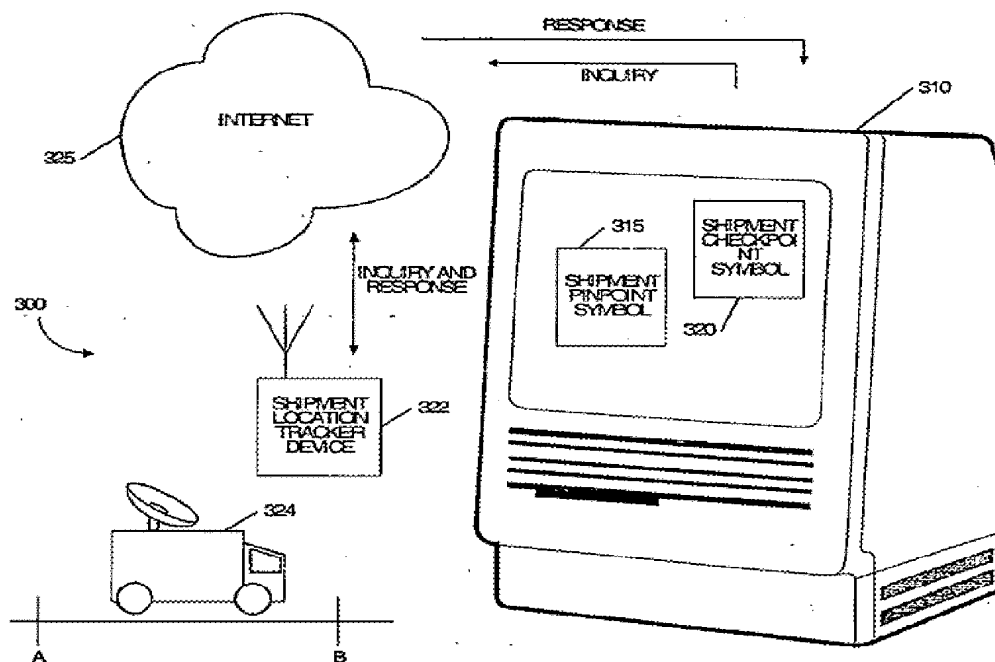

FIG. 3

See FIG. 1, Specification at page 7, lines 3-18. The independent claims are reproduced below with merely illustrative annotations that are not intended to be comprehensive or limiting.

Independent claim 1 recites:

1. A computer implemented method for a user to find pinpoint status of a shipment being transported by a carrier, comprising (See, e.g., FIGs. 1-4, specification page 3, line 13 – page 7, line 30):
        clicking on a shipment pinpoint symbol shortcut icon (121, 315) on a computer screen (310);
        connecting automatically to an internet or private network (123, 125, 325), if a connection is not already established;
        then, in response to clicking on the shipment pinpoint symbol shortcut icon (121, 315), sending automatically a shipping pinpoint inquiry (127) to the carrier via the internet or private network (325);
        requesting a pinpoint location of the shipment in response to the shipping status inquiry (129); and
        receiving the requested pinpoint location of the shipment to the computer screen (131),
        wherein the pinpoint location identifies a position between checkpoints at each of which shipment presence is monitored regardless of user inquiries.

Independent claim 13 recites:

13.   A system for a user to obtain via internet or other network, a pinpoint status of a shipment being transported by a carrier, comprising (See, e.g., FIGs. 1-4, specification page 3, line 13 – page 7, line 30);
        a server computer for providing to a user computer a clickable shipment pinpoint symbol shortcut icon file (315) that triggers a shipping pinpoint inquiry to a carrier; and
        a shipping location tracker device (322), responsive to the shipping pinpoint inquiry, for providing the pinpoint status to the user computer via the internet or private network;
        wherein the pinpoint status identifies a position (324) between two checkpoints at each of which shipment presence is monitored regardless of user inquiries.

Independent claim 25 recites:

25.   A system for a user to obtain via a network tracking status information for a shipment being transported by a carrier including at least one of a pinpoint status and a checkpoint status, comprising (See, e.g., FIGs. 1-4, specification page 3, line 13 – page 7, line 30);

a server computer for providing to a user computer a clickable shipment pinpoint symbol shortcut icon file (315) that triggers a pinpoint tracking status inquiry for the shipment to a carrier; and a clickable shipment checkpoint symbol shortcut icon file (320) that triggers a checkpoint tracking status inquiry for the shipment to the carrier; and

a shipment tracking device (322) operatively connected to the server computer, the server computer using the shipment tracking device to provide the pinpoint status to the user computer via the network in response to the user selecting the clickable shipment pinpoint symbol shortcut icon file and to provide the checkpoint status to the user computer via the network in response to the user selecting the clickable shipment checkpoint symbol shortcut icon file,

wherein the pinpoint status identifies a position (324) between two checkpoints at each of which shipment presence is monitored regardless of user inquiries.

Additional features of the invention are discussed below in the Argument section of this Brief. This summary is not intended to supplant the description of the claimed subject matter as provided in the claims as recited in Appendix A, as understood in light of the entire specification.